

## **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

**Madison Public Schools  
Board of Education Regular Meeting  
January 19, 2021  
7:30 PM  
Remote**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

*Full documentation of these proceedings can be found through on demand video located in the Meetings/Minutes section of the district website*

### **1. Call to Order / Attendance**

The public meeting of the Madison Board of Education was called to order by Chair Galen Cawley at 7:32 p.m. Mr. Cawley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Galen Cawley, Greg DeSantis, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Violet McNerney, Happy Marino, Cathy Miller, Tom Pellegrino, Emily Rosenthal, Katie Stein

Also present: Craig Cooke, Ph.D., Superintendent; Gail Dahling-Hench, Assistant Superintendent; Liz Battaglia, Sped Director, Bill McMinn, Facilities Director, Stacy Nobitz, Finance Director, Zoe Roos, Communications Specialist.

Various members of the public via Zoom.

### **2. School / Community Session - 7:30 p.m.**

#### **2.1. John-Michael Parker, CT State Representative, 101st District**

John-Michael Parker shared some background information on his work experiences – from teacher in a private school to manager in a non-profit program, currently on the organizational side of running a state-wide arts & education association. His work in the CT State Legislature will include serving on the Education Committee as well as the Environment & Public Health Committees. Representative Parker noted he has been meeting with school superintendents within the 101<sup>st</sup> District to become acquainted and hear their concerns.

### **3. Board of Education Student Representative Report**

Isabelle Vagell and Eric Dillner

Isabelle reported the new scheduling process is going well. The course catalog is now online, very organized and easy to reference. Course selection will be done through Infinite Campus along with a form submitted through Google Classroom. Isabelle gave an update to the process to hear all student voices who may not be involved with student leadership. The leadership team met last week and finalized details on a form which will be posted online for students to access and will be rolled out later this year.

Winter sports opened and Eric reported it was an exciting day as he was reunited with the hockey team. An extended Wellness Wednesday will take place tomorrow with the first guest speaker talking about perseverance and resilience. Seniors will have a live presentation; juniors will participate in Google Meet and Freshman & Sophomores will have their regular session. Part II of Freshman orientation is occurring as we speak.

#### **4. Superintendent's Report**

Craig A. Cooke, Ph.D.

Dr. Cooke thanked Representative Parker as well as Isabelle and Eric, noting he is looking forward to hearing more regarding student voices. Dr. Cooke noted students are now attending in person; however, DHHS remains in hybrid, two Polson teams are in distance learning, as well as three Brown teams, with two returning tomorrow and one returning January 22. There have also been a few individual classrooms in distance learning.

Dr. Cooke thanked the Town of Madison for keeping the district updated on vaccination news and noted we are waiting for the go ahead from the Health Department to place teachers into the VAMS system. Staff continues to be part of Group 1b, which now includes individuals 65 & older, causing us to be moved farther down the list. The town will be completing Group 1a tomorrow, using all vaccinations received.

Dr. Cooke spoke to the high participation rate of DHHS students in winter sports and noted Mr. Salutari and Mr. Semple were well prepared for sports to begin today. Thanks to the coaches for attending a meeting over the weekend! Dr. Cooke noted sports will be monitored closely for signs of COVID.

##### **4.1. 2021-2022 School Year Budget**

We are preparing the budget book to be sent to Boards of Selectmen and Finance on February 1.

##### **4.2. 2021-2022 School Year Calendar**

Dr. Cooke spoke to adjustments in the calendar. With regard to Board meeting dates, if we followed our normal scheduling pattern, meetings would fall on 12/7 and 12/21 and felt the 21<sup>st</sup> was too close to the holiday. We instead scheduled two meetings in November – 11/9 and 11/30 and one on 12/14. LEARN has changed their April break from 4/11 to 4/18 and neighboring districts, including Clinton and Guilford, have done so as well. This does not include Good Friday, which will move the last day of school from June 13 to June 14. The March 15 Board meeting will be moved up in the list of March dates. Dr. Cooke noted the district will be in session the day after Halloween (Monday, November 1) and there will be no school for students on November 2. Polson will remain a polling place. Dr. Cooke addressed concerns regarding the need to attend school during April break, noting that using this time is highly unlikely because of the ability to conduct distance learning during snow days and the number of make-up days allotted in June. Dr. Cooke shared the March/April break survey results: Staff: 65 in March; 443 in April. Community: 421 in March; 753 in April.

#### **5. Board Member Comments**

Katie Stein reported she and Mr. Cawley have been attending CIP meetings since October and noted the various Town departments that have made requests. The Board of Education presented to the CIP on January 14, Public Hearings will take place on January 20 and 26 and a Town Hall Budget Workshop will take place on January 21. The budget goes to the Boards of Selectmen & Finance in February, with a referendum in May. CIP will be wrapped into the Town budget.

#### **6. Audience Response to Information Presented (Ref. Bylaw #9540.10) - None**

#### **7. Consent Agenda (Ref. Bylaw #9540.2 and #9540.8) – No items**

#### **8. Board Committees / Liaison Updates (Ref. Bylaw #9450)**

##### **8.1. Curriculum and Student Development**

Members: Diane Infantine-Vyce, Chair; Greg DeSantis, Catherine Miller

Dr. Infantine-Vyce reported the committee met on January 12. Erin Corbett of MYFS and DHHS School Psychologists Lindsey Fiondella and Jori Smith were invited back from the shortened December 8 meeting and gave a presentation on suicide prevention training, safe school training and QPR

(Question, Persuade, Refer) online gatekeeper training for suicide prevention courses discussed in detail. Gail Dahling-Hench presented the K-5 Distance Learning schedule created in the event of the need for K-5 whole school distance learning. An overview of Madison's SRBI Plan was presented and discussed for both K-8 and 9-12. Core Instruction and Tiers 1, 2 and 3 were identified and described in detail. Dr. DeSantis inquired about data and distribution levels for Easy CBM risk levels for both the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and 26-49<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

#### **8.2. Communications Committee**

Members: Tom Pellegrino, Chair; Diane Infantine-Vyce, Greg DeSantis

Committee has not met – no report.

#### **8.3. Facilities Committee**

Members: Emily Rosenthal, Chair, Happy Marino, Katie Stein

Committee has not met – no report.

#### **8.4. Finance Committee**

Members: Katie Stein, Chair, Happy Marino, Tom Pellegrino

Mrs. Stein reported the committee met tonight and reviewed the budget process with feedback from Dr. Cooke. It was suggested to add a budget workshop date(s) for the Board and to collaborate with the Board of Finance prior to creating "assumptions". The committee discussed the line-by-line vote vs. the approval of the budget as a whole. The transportation contract was received and will be brought to the Board for approval. The committee will meet again on February 9 and be given an update on the Food Services Program. Mrs. Stein noted the budget started out with a 1.94% increase which was reduced to 1.47% and ultimately landed at a 1.40% increase due to identifying further budget reductions. The amount of the 2021-2022 School Year budget is \$59,372,037.

#### **8.5. Personnel Committee**

Members: Violet McNerney, Chair, Diane Infantine-Vyce, Catherine Miller

Committee has not met – no report.

#### **8.6. Policy Committee**

Members: Happy Marino, Chair; Violet McNerney, Emily Rosenthal

Mrs. Marino noted the committee met this evening and reviewed 10 policies, 8 of which will move to the February 9 Board of Education meeting for a first reading. Two policies will require further clarification before going forward. The 2021-2022 school year calendar was reviewed once again and is brought forth tonight for approval. We briefly discussed the Mask Policy to ensure the policy includes mask breaks.

#### **8.7. LEARN Liaison**

Katie Stein

LEARN Chief Financial Officer, Mike Belden, presented "The Fiscal State of the Agency" Mr. Belden shared a breakdown of revenues and expenditures with the bulk of expenditures dedicated to salaries and benefits. Lower paid employees will receive an additional \$1.00/hour raise positioning LEARN to meet the state's minimum wage goal of \$15/hour and non- union employees will receive a 2.5% increase. Benefits will remain the same with the exception of a 1% increase in the employee contribution rate for health insurance.

Legislative update – The goal of both the Commissioner of Education and Governor is to increase the diversification of Connecticut Educators. The RESC Alliance expansion of the Teacher's Residency Program will play an important role in the state's efforts.

Mrs. Ericson provided a short overview of the CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) *Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools*. Attachments are included. Area superintendents are hosting a legislative forum with area legislators to discuss this blueprint and the support needed from the State to meet these well-defined goals for improvement.

Some highlights include:

**1. ECS/State Share**

Assure that the ECS is predictable and stable; increase the ECS appropriation by 2.5% every year for the next 15 years

**2. Structural Racism/School Health**

Reduce/ultimately eliminate – with the State taking the lead – disparities and inequities in schools affecting Black/African American, Latino, English Language and LGBTQ learners and students with disabilities.

- Increase significantly the number of educators of color.
- Rethink virtual learning.
- Ensure that schools prepare for student/teacher safety, and incorporate trauma, mental health and wellbeing programming.

**3. School Improvement/Categorical Grants**

Increase the reimbursement % for School Construction from 10%-70% to 10%-80% with stricter project requirements.

**4. Leadership**

Expand SDE human capital to ensure there are adequate resources to implement new and robust accountability standards 21<sup>st</sup> century curricula.

**5. Intergovernmental Issues**

Seek to reduce the number of student assessments but add PSAT in grade 9. Support continued changes to provide financial relief for the TRB.

**8.8. Board of Selectmen Liaison**

Scott Murphy

Mr. Murphy noted a study of Town vehicles has been done and the facilities study is wrapping up. Budget workshops are beginning this week with the Board of Selectmen. Madison Youth and Family Services also conducted a study to see how they compare to neighboring towns in terms of services they offer. The Island Avenue School Future Use committee presented at the last Board of Selectmen meeting and the OLM lease renewal is up for discussion. Mr. Murphy reported there are 51 active COVID cases in Madison at this time.

**9. Action Item: Motion to approve the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar**

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to approve the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

**10. Action Item: Motion to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2021 Board of Education Meeting (Ref. Bylaw #9540.9)**

MOTION: by Infantine-Vyce, seconded by McNerney to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2021 Board of Education meeting.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

**11. Action Item: Approve \$1,400 donation to Jeffrey Elementary School from Steady Photography**

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Pellegrino to approve the \$1,400 donation to Jeffrey Elementary School from Steady Photography.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

**12. Old Business**

**13. Future Agenda Items**

**14. Meetings/Dates of Importance**

**15. Action Item: Motion to enter into Executive Session to Discuss Potential Land Acquisition**

MOTION: by Stein, seconded by Rosenthal to enter into Executive Session to Discuss Potential Land Acquisition and to invite Dr. Craig Cooke, Superintendent and Mr. Bill McMinn, Director of Facilities, into Executive Session.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, McNerney, Marino, Miller, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 9-0

**16. Adjournment**

MOTION: by DeSantis, seconded by Infantine-Vyce to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

AYES: Cawley, DeSantis, Infantine-Vyce, Marino, Pellegrino, Rosenthal, Stein

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

MOTION CARRIED: 7-0

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